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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Annual Report of the Language Development  
Committee for FY 1974

1. The Annual Report of the Language Development Committee (LDC) is attached. The report includes an analysis of existing language skills within the Agency, the staffing of language designated positions, and progress of the Language Development Program.

2. During the fiscal year significant developments related to foreign languages included:

a. Provisions of Guidance to the Operations Directorate Concerning Foreign Language Needs. On behalf of the LDC, the Language Learning Center of the Office of Training developed an analytical model for determining whether or not operating components have sufficient language skills among their personnel to staff language designated positions on a continuing basis. Analyses (summarized in Attachment A) were provided to all area divisions in the DDO. The Deputy Director for Operations has stated that they are highly beneficial in helping his Directorate develop plans to satisfy its requirements for language qualified operations officers. Similar studies for DDI and DDA are planned for FY 1975.

b. Percent of Qualified Incumbencies for Language Designated Positions in DDO. As of 1 July 1974, DDO has filled [ ] language designated operations officer positions with language qualified personnel. This percentage represents no appreciable change from a year ago. At the high end of the scale, EUR and WH Divisions have approximately 60% of their [ ] designated positions filled by qualified incumbents. By contrast, of the [ ] positions designated for Soviet Bloc languages, all of which are at Headquarters, only [ ] are filled by language qualified incumbents. The breakdown by individual languages is contained in Attachment B.

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c. Trends in Foreign Language Inventories. The five-year trend (FY 1970-74) reveals significant speaking skill gains in Arabic



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detailed listing of the five-year language profile is provided in Attachment C.

d. Translation Problem in Soviet Bloc Languages. Increasing availability, through clandestine collection, of military and technical documents in Soviet Bloc languages, coupled with the decreasing number of employees with skills in these languages, already has overburdened our resources. The problem is likely to be extended to Middle Eastern and South Asian languages as a result of the export of Bloc technology to these areas.

e. Recruitment of Personnel with Language Skills. The Career Training Program is continuing its high emphasis on recruiting new officers with language skills. Of the 61 CT's who were recruited for the Program in FY 1974, 37 (61%) have speaking skills at the 2 or better level; 16 of these skills are at the 4 and 5 levels. Language training in the colleges is declining for a number of reasons and recruiting new employees with language skills in the number and level desired is likely to become more difficult. Recent contacts with academic representatives, both directly and through the Inter-agency Language Roundtable, reveal an essential ignorance in the colleges and universities about opportunities in the Agency and in the government in general for people with foreign language skills. Steps to publicize such opportunities are just getting underway.

f. Administrative Issues.

(1) Changeover to Numbers from Letters in Machine Runs, (that is, 1 will replace S (Slight), etc.). This change, which will put our coding system in line with the rest of the government language community, will be accomplished in FY 75.

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(2) Annual Personnel Plan. The APP is most supportive of the Language Development Program. The exercise calls the attention of Office Heads to shortages of qualified people in language designated positions and encourages them to include language development and recruitment of language qualified people in their personnel planning.

(3) Language Competence Comments in Fitness Reports. An LDC-sponsored survey of sample fitness reports from each Directorate indicated about 40% compliance with the provision of [ ] that supervisors comment specifically on the language competency of incumbents of language designated positions. As a consequence, a memorandum has been sent to each Deputy Director asking observance of this regulation.

g. Language Proficiency Cash Awards (LPCA). The LPCA program continues to focus on languages for which there is an operational need, and from all indications continues to achieve its aims. Awards were given most frequently in Arabic, Russian and Spanish. (Attachment D)

h. Inter-Agency Activities. The Inter-Agency Language Round-table committees (formed after the 1973 GAO Report) were quite active during the fiscal year. Two projects of the Committees on which CIA employees did significant work were:

- (1) Development of a model core curriculum course in Chinese.
- (2) Symposium on Testing Foreign Language Competencies.

i. Language Learning Center Activities.



(2) Termination of the Before-and-After-Hours Language Training (BAHLT) Program. Because of low enrollment and poor attendance the program was ended. Off-duty language instruction can now be obtained through the Off-Campus Program.

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3. Conclusions.

We are having a good deal of difficulty maintaining the Agency's language capabilities at the level required to do our work. Recent losses at the 4 and 5 levels of skill have deprived the Agency of the ability to conduct its business in some languages at a sophisticated level. These skills cannot normally be replaced by training -- but only through recruitment or by practice and concentrated study by the employee in the field over an extended period of time. In those instances where our language skills are spread thin, we must begin to plan for better use of the skilled linguist by free interchange across Directorate lines. We should also give consideration to retaining more employees who have key language skills beyond the age of mandatory retirement. We must also become more selective in choosing students for language study and assure that they remain in training until the levels of skill required by their assignments are attained.

[Redacted Signature]

Alfonso Rodriguez  
Chairman,

Language Development Committee

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
FOR FY74

1. LDC's Advisory Role on Foreign Language Needs.

a. The LDC, taking a new and more active role as advisor to the components regarding their foreign language assets and projected needs, asked the Language Learning Center (LLC) to do a study of the Agency's skills in languages taught at the Center and in certain other key languages.

b. In the study, a comparison was made between the skills required for each language designated position and the skills available to each area division among operations officers at the same grade as the position and two grades lower, using the 3:1 ratio -- three language qualified officers for each language designated position. (See Attachments A and B.) Surprisingly, the study reveals a marked deficiency within the Operations Directorate of operations officers

figures may be somewhat high in that the established guideline of needing three qualified officers for each language designated position may not be valid in instances where the number of positions in a given language is large and "backup" skills can be used with relatively greater versatility.

c. The analyses have been forwarded to the divisions concerned and the Deputy Director for Operations has informed us they are most helpful to the Directorate in planning to satisfy its needs for language qualified operations officers. Similar studies for DDI and DDA language designated positions will be completed in FY 75.

2. Five-Year Inventory Trend.

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3. Developing Shortage of High Skills in Soviet Bloc Languages.

a. High or near-native skills in the East European languages and, to a lesser extent in Russian, have always been rare and difficult to recruit. Applicants presenting skills in these languages often have close relatives in Eastern Europe; others are deficient in their knowledge of English. Moreover, conditions in American society -- the tendency among young Americans to cast off ancestral origins and eschew learning foreign languages, and a lack of incentives, in terms of professional opportunities, to master languages like Czech or Hungarian -- have resulted in a smaller pool of qualified applicants for language positions in the Agency. Note that the chart of Operations Officer Language Proficiency Needs (Attachment A) shows two language

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predictions or more yet to come. The volume of these materials -- complicated by their sensitivity and complex vocabulary -- is straining the Agency's capabilities to provide prompt translations by use of regular staff or even contract personnel. Moreover, the export of Bloc military and industrial technology to the Middle East and South Asian countries is likely to strain our capabilities to handle technical materials in the languages of those areas as well.

4. Agency Measures to Deal with These Problems.

a. Intensified recruitment for high language skills by establishing direct contact between the colleges and Agency language officers to make the schools aware of professional opportunities for linguists in the Agency. Recruiting would include not only graduates but possibly junior faculty being released in the current retrenchment on the campuses. [ ] has already taken some first steps in this direction.) In addition, recruitment would seek to identify applicants who have combined language study with military experience or study of one of the sciences. Experience indicates that it is more effective to take a scientifically trained applicant and teach him a foreign language than it is to train a language major in the sciences.

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b. Mandatory retirement at age 60 of employees covered by the Civil Service System will cost the Agency critical language assets. In a recent instance, a retiring [ ] linguist was approached with a position offer by NSA; had he accepted, he presumably could have gone on working until he reached age 70. As veteran officers with high or native skills retire they are often replaced by employees with lower skill levels. LDC believes that the Agency would benefit from following a supportive policy in granting retirement deferments and independent or part-time contracts to strongly skilled linguists reaching age 60. These veterans can be used not only to handle complex priority translation tasks but to provide practical on-the-job training to younger linguists who are completing formal instruction.

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c. Agency policy regarding personnel slotting tends to discourage flexible use of language qualified personnel to satisfy diverse Agency requirements. Migration of language qualified personnel out of language work to positions which offer greater incentives in terms of grade, prestige or job interest makes for perennial recruitment and training problems. Unless incoming CT's with language proficiencies, as noted below are assigned early in their careers to language designated positions, or unless language development is continued, their skills will atrophy and prove of limited utility to the Agency in the long term. A centralized pool of personnel with high but scarce skills, especially translators, in critical languages should be established to enable a number of components to draw upon their services as requirements shift or intensify at various points in the Agency. [ ]

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[ ] DDI and Division D/DDO are a case in point. Both have need of translation services in [ ] to process the Soviet Bloc technological documents mentioned previously, but individually are having difficulty obtaining the services of translators skilled in these languages. Language training must be strengthened and made more adaptable. For example, the Language Learning Center/OTR is trying to satisfy a variety of Polish training requirements -- full time and part time, speaking and reading/translation. Its single Polish instructor is not able to satisfy the varied requirements, but the total training volume is not sufficient to justify the addition of another instructor.

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5. Language Skills of Career Trainees. Of the 221 CT's in six classes from July 1968 through July 1970, 94 (43%) had a foreign language speaking proficiency at the 2 or better level. By comparison, of the 115 CT's in four classes from July 1972 through January 1974, 71 (62%) had a foreign language speaking proficiency at the 2 or better level.

6. Administrative Issues.

a. Changeover from Letters to Numbers in Machine Runs.

Statistical Reporting Branch/OP informed us that beginning with the December 1974 machine runs, proficiency test scores will be reported in numerical form rather than adjectivally, i.e., the computer will print out 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 instead of N, H, I, E, S, and the adjectives "Native," "High," "Intermediate," "Elementary," and "Slight" will no longer have official status. The Agency's coding system will then parallel that of the Foreign Service Institute.

b. Annual Personnel Plan. By the nature of its organization, the Annual Personnel Plan should be of considerable value to the Language Development Program. The Plan requires a statistical report of all language capabilities -- showing language designated positions, qualified incumbents, planned training and recruitment, and expected attrition. The Plan also requires an itemized listing of language training plans showing the past year goals and achievements in language development in comparison with the coming year goals. The APP will call the attention of Office Heads to shortages of qualified people in language designated positions and encourage the Office Heads to include language development and recruitment of language qualified people in their personnel planning.

c. Comments in Fitness Reports on Language Competence.

25X1 [ ] requires comments on language skills in fitness reports of employees occupying language designated positions. In order to learn how well this requirement was being followed, the DDI, DDA, and DDO members of the LDC each reviewed ten fitness reports from their respective Directorates. About 40% of those reviewed contained comments on the employee's language skill. A memorandum was sent to each Deputy Director calling attention to this part of [ ] and recommending that supervisors make appropriate comments.

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25X1 6. Language Proficiency Cash Awards Program. From all indications the LPCA program continues to focus on languages for which there is an operational need. During the past fiscal year, 78 awards totaling \$58,600 were made to Agency personnel for learning languages (47 in the DDO earned \$44,600, 30 in the DDA \$13,500, and one in the DDI \$500). Arabic led the list with 12 awards totalling \$12,900. There were 129 new participants designated to the Program, the majority being in Arabic, [redacted] (See Attachment D) In the three years the Program has been in operation, (FY 72-FY 74), a total of \$160,900 has been given in 217 awards -- DDO, \$117,700; DDA, \$34,700; and DDI, \$8,500. The number of participants has now reached 514.

7. Inter-Agency Activities. As a result of the Government Accounting Office Report of 22 January 1973, "Need to Improve Language Training Programs and Assignments for U.S. Government Personnel Overseas," the Inter-Agency Language Roundtable (ILR) formed special committees for materials development, testing, research, information and management. The LLC is represented on all committees. Two significant projects of FY 74 were:

a. Core Curriculum Project for Chinese. The member Agencies of the ILR are jointly funding and developing a prototype Chinese course to demonstrate the feasibility of writing course materials that can be used in common by all members of the government language community. At present each agency uses materials designed to meet its own particular requirements. A CIA linguist is one of the chief designers of the prototype course. Chinese was selected as the target language because of the need for course materials to reflect linguistic changes during the past 20 years in the People's Republic of China. As of 1 September, [redacted] will also contribute funds to the project.

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b. Language Testing Symposium. A three-day international symposium on the problem of testing foreign language competencies was held in March 1974 under the auspices of U.S. Government agencies. Over two hundred people from the U.S. and six other countries heard some of America's leading experts on proficiency testing discuss the major issues in the field. A CIA linguist did the organizational work for the symposium, chaired the meetings, and delivered the keynote address.

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In the GAO Report, State Department was taken to task in several instances for failing to have language qualified people in language designated positions. Even though intelligence agencies were excluded from the GAO Report, it is possible that in future budget hearings Congress will ask CIA about its language activities in light of the GAO findings.

8. Language Learning Center Activities.

a. "Total Immersion" Language Training Experiment.

1) For years a recurrent theme of LLC consumers has been the need for students to acquire S-3 proficiency and job-related training. Two long-standing problems in language training have been: (a) the acknowledged fact that most students cannot achieve professional competence (S-3) in a language under normal classroom conditions, and (b) the difficulty posed by security considerations in using job-related language exercises for DDO officers. As an experiment it was decided to conduct a series of four-week "Total Immersion" programs to see if these problems could be overcome.

2) The LLC conducted the first of these programs on 23 October-16 November 1973 for 12 students of Russian. Building upon the positive experiences of the first program, [redacted] 25X1  
[redacted] Houses were held on 1-26 April and 20 May-14 June 1974, respectively. Probably the single most noticeable gain for all students in the program was in speaking confidence. This is an ingredient usually missing in normal full-time training, and the key to reaching S-3 proficiency. We also have strong evidence that operations-related vocabulary can be taught effectively while at the same time raising proficiencies to S-3. We are convinced, consequently, that "total immersion" is a professional, cost-effective language training vehicle.

b. Termination of the Before-and-After-Hours Language Training (BAHLT) Program. The BAHLT program, reinstituted in 1969, was conceived as a convenient means for enabling seriously motivated students needing or wanting to learn a foreign language to do so without interfering with their job responsibilities. Given the low enrollment (84) and poor attendance in the FY 74 program (one-third less attendance than

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the previous year with only about one-fourth of the students staying in the program to the end), the Office of Training could no longer justify the investment and the program was terminated at the end of the fiscal year. This off-duty instruction is being handled in the Off-Campus Program, which now includes language instruction. The advantages resulting from this change are: (1) lower overall cost; (2) college credit for students; and (3) motivation to complete the course, since a student who fails to do so will be required to reimburse the Agency for his tuition.

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